# SUFFRAGE—A RIGHT.

BY IDA HUSTED HARPER.

WHEN the first organized demand for the suffrage was made by women in 1848, they designated it as a *right*. The leaders of the movement during the succeeding fifty-eight years have continued steadfast in their assumption that, in a republic, the ballot is a citizen's right, and that in the United States women citizens are arbitrarily and unjustly deprived of this right.

At the beginning of our Colonial life, so many qualifications were imposed that about three-fourths of the male colonists were without a vote. By the close of the seventeenth century, however, the views of personal freedom had so broadened that the right of every law-abiding man to individual representation was established in all the colonies (except in case of those without a vestige of property), and disfranchisement was enforced only as a punishment. Those persons who at the present day hold to the flabby doctrine that the suffrage is a privilege and not a right, are recommended to make a study of what happened when England attempted to take from the colonies their "power of consent," or, in other words, their vote. In the whole history of the revolution which began with this first attempt and ended with the surrender of Cornwallis—a period of about forty years—never is the suffrage named but as a *right*. As early as 1741, when it was first proposed by England to tax the colonies, Benjamin Franklin was consulted, and in his answer he said:

"Compelling the colonies to pay money for their own defence without their consent . . . would be treating them as conquered enemies and not as free Britons, who hold it for their undoubted *right* not to be taxed but by their own consent, given through their own Representatives. . . . The colonists do not deserve to be deprived of the *native right of Britons*, the right of being taxed only by Representatives chosen by themselves."

The culmination came in the Stamp Act of 1765. Patrick Henry hurled his defiance at the Mother Country in the Legislature of Virginia. James Otis issued his famous pamphlet declaring that "Taxation without Representation is Tyranny." A General Congress met in New York and adopted a Declaration that it was "the undoubted *right* of Englishmen that no taxes be imposed upon them but with their own consent."

The grievances of the colonists had been heavy and numerous, but this usurpation of the power to levy taxes being the climax explains why, in all their protests, the question of taxation plays so important a part. In October, 1765, the Massachusetts Legislature, in an address to the Governor, declared:

"There are certain *original, inherent rights* belonging to the people which the Parliament cannot divest them of consistent with their own constitution; among these is representation in the same body which exercises the power of taxation."

Two days later, the Legislature passed this resolution:

"There are certain essential rights . . . which are founded in the law of God and Nature and are *the common rights of mankind* . . . that no man can justly take the property of another without his consent, and that upon this original principle the right of representation in the same body which exercises the power of making laws for levying taxes . . . is evidently founded."

The colonists were assured that they were "virtually" represented, and Samuel Adams answered indignantly:

"We have been told that we are 'virtually' represented; that we are put upon a footing with Birmingham, Manchester and other towns in England which send no Representatives and yet are taxed. But have not those towns a *constitutional right* to be represented? And, if they choose to waive it, can that be a good reason for taxing the colonists without representation?"

In a notable speech, James Otis quoted from Lord Coke:

"The very act of taxing exercised over those who are not represented appears to me to deprive them of one of their most essential *rights* as freemen, and, if continued, seems to be in effect an entire disfranchisement of every civil right."

In the writings of Mr. Adams at this momentous period are many such assertions as the following:

"There can be no constitutional right to tax the subject in a body where he is not represented. . . . The Acts of Parliament and the

British constitution consider every individual person in the realm as present in that High Court by his Representative upon his own free election. This is his indispensable privilege. It is founded on the Eternal Law of Equity. It is an *Original Right of Nature.*"

In 1768, the Massachusetts House of Representatives sent an address to the Lord Chancellor of England, which declared:

"The position that taxation and representation are inseparable is founded on *the immutable law of nature;* but the Americans had no representation in the Parliament when they were taxed. Are they not, then, unfortunate in these instances in having that separated *which God and Nature joined?*"

And the Lord Chancellor responded:

"My position is this—taxation and representation are morally inseparable. The position is founded in a law of nature—nay, more, it is itself *an eternal law of nature.*"

The Legislature sent an address to William Pitt, affirming "*the indisputable right* of all men . . . to be present in person or by representation in the body where they are taxed"; and in the House of Commons, January 14th, 1766, he said:

"This kingdom has no right to lay a tax on the colonies. . . . There is an idea in some that the colonies are virtually represented in this House. I would fain know by whom an American is represented here. . . . The idea of a virtual representation of America in this House is the most contemptible that ever entered the head of a man. It does not deserve a serious refutation. The Commons of America, represented in their several assemblies, have ever been in possession of this, *their constitutional right,* of giving and granting their own money. They would have been slaves if they had not enjoyed it."

The Massachusetts Legislature memorialized the other Colonial Assemblies on the continuation of the "infringement of their natural and constitutional rights." Virginia joined in defiant resistance. Great Britain, blind and deaf, responded in 1773 by forcing on them the Taxed Tea. The next year witnessed the assembly and proceedings of that revolutionary body, the Continental Congress, which said in its petition to the King, "We do not solicit the grant of any *new right,*" but declared, "The foundation of liberty, and of all free government, is a *right in the people* to participate in their Legislative Council."

It seems incredible that any one could assume that the first colonists regarded the suffrage as other than an absolute *right.*

We come now to another vital period in the development of our nation—that ushered in by the Declaration of Independence. This document was framed by the greatest statesmen of that or any other time in our country's history, and in one immortal paragraph it fixed the status of republican government forevermore:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness; that to secure these rights Governments are instituted among men, *deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed;* that whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends it is *the right of the people* to alter or abolish it and to institute new Government."

In the arraignment of the King, it says:

"He has refused to pass laws for the accommodation of large districts of people unless these people would relinquish the *right* of Representation in the Legislature, a *right inestimable* to them and formidable to tyrants only."

The sum total of the grievances of the colonists may be comprised in the single statement that Great Britain was determined to govern them *without their consent,* and that such government was an unbearable tyranny. In the words of Franklin:

"Those who have no voice nor vote in the election of Representatives do not enjoy liberty, but are absolutely enslaved to those who have votes and to their Representatives."

Thomas Paine wrote:

"The right of voting for Representatives is the *primary right* by which other rights are protected. To take away this right is to reduce men to a state of slavery, for slavery consists in being subject to the will of another, and he that has not a vote in the election of Representatives is so in this case."

Later, Alexander Hamilton declared in the "Federalist":

"The mode and manner in which the people shall take part in the Government of their creation may be prescribed by the Constitution, but the *right itself* is antecedent to all constitutions. It is inalienable and can neither be bought nor sold nor given away."

And James Madison said:

"Let it be remembered that it has ever been the pride and the boast of America that the rights for which she contended were *the rights of human nature.*"

When the seven years' war was ended, which firmly established this noble principle, the States appointed delegates who met in Philadelphia and spent nearly four months in preparing the Constitution of the United States. Here were gathered the finest flower of the new nation—Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, Madison, Gerry, Rutledge, Pinckney, Rufus King, Roger Sherman, Robert and Gouverneur Morris—an unsurpassed galaxy of statesmen. On most of the vital points they were able to reach an agreement; but, on all matters relating to suffrage and representation, the arguments were so long and vehement that Dr. Franklin had to beg for moderation and coolness, and at last to ask prayers for this purpose! It was unanimously admitted that "the people would risk every consequence rather than part with so dear a *right,*" but the point at issue was how it should be regulated. Madison expressed it:

"The right of suffrage is certainly one of the fundamental articles of representative government and *ought not be left to be regulated by the Legislatures.*"

In this Constitutional Convention of 1787, the suffrage was universally recognized as the *pivotal right* on which all others turned. Its proceedings show clearly the prevailing sentiment, to let the States regulate this in all matters pertaining to State and local government; but there was a determination on the part of many delegates that the Constitution should control the election of members of the National Congress. A compromise was finally effected, but Section 4 provides that "The Congress may at any time by law make or alter these regulations." When James Madison was questioned later as to the meaning of this clause, he answered that Congress reserved this power because, "should the people of any State by any means be deprived of the right of suffrage, it was judged proper that it should be remedied by the General Government." That is, it could *restore the suffrage* to the people.*

* Let this point be borne in mind when a decision of the United States Supreme Court is referred to, further on, to the effect that the General Government has no control over suffrage.

Luther Martin, Attorney-General of Maryland, a member of the convention, said afterwards to his State Legislature:

"Those who advocated equality of suffrage took the matter up on the original principles of government. They urged that all men, considered in a state of nature, before any government is formed, are equally free and independent, no one having any right or authority to exercise power over another, and this without any regard to difference in personal strength, understanding or wealth; that, when such individuals enter into government, they each have a *right* to an equal voice in its first formation, and afterward have each a *right* to an equal vote in every matter which relates to their government. . . . Every person has a *right* to an equal vote in choosing that Representative who is to do for the whole. . . . If we were to admit that, because a man was more wise, more strong or more wealthy, he should be entitled to more votes than another, it would be inconsistent with the freedom and liberty of that other and would reduce him to slavery. . . . The disfranchised might not feel their chains, but they would, notwithstanding, wear them, and whenever their master pleased he might draw them so tight as to gall them to the bone."

No one, whatever may be his personal opinion, can read the history of our Government up to this point without the conviction that its founders, like the colonists, regarded the suffrage as an inherent, inalienable, absolute *right*. Was Woman included in the magnificent scheme?

We must accept the probable fact that at no time did the illustrious forefathers entertain the idea of including women in their claim of an "inherent right" to individual representation. They conscientiously held that man was divinely endowed with complete authority over woman. Of the equality of women with themselves, in any respect, they had not the smallest conception. The fight for political freedom was made on the ground that those who paid taxes should have a voice in the levying and spending of these taxes. Suffrage and office-holding were based on the ownership of property. The women of those early days were usually married as soon as they were old enough, and by the laws no wife could own a dollar's worth of real or personal property, not even the clothes she wore. All she might have at marriage, all she might acquire, passed at once into the possession of the husband. Thus she had no claim for representation on account of taxation. No schools were provided for girls in Colonial days; they knew only what their uneducated mothers taught them; in the best families they learned simply reading, writing and

enough arithmetic to keep the household accounts, while the masses of them were without even this simple education. The demands of pioneer life on women, added to those of the large families which were the rule, left little time for interests outside of domestic life. Tradition, custom and conditions combined to prevent their participation in public affairs. It is, therefore, not unreasonable that the men of that age should have entirely failed to recognize the "inherent right" of women to every privilege they claimed for themselves. That those women, in spite of their handicaps, fully earned the highest recognition is shown by the records of their toil, hardships, self-sacrifice and personal heroism during all those exacting years of Colonial settlement and Revolutionary War; and there is ample evidence that some of the most progressive made strong protest against their exclusion. The records also show that some women did vote in the early days of Virginia and Massachusetts; and that New Jersey in her State Constitution, July 2d, 1776, gave the suffrage to all qualified "inhabitants," and this continued in force till 1807, when the Legislature took away from women this Constitutional right! There is much reason for believing that, by the time the Constitution was formed, women had begun to manifest considerable desire for recognition, since in the first draft of this document, made by Hamilton, he used the words "men" and "male" a number of times. It is a rather peculiar circumstance that in the final draft they were not once used, but "people," "persons" and "citizens" were substituted. One is almost justified in believing that this was done intentionally, in order not to erect barriers in case the States should at any time desire to make women electors. Another significant indication that women might have been putting forth some claims is seen in the fact that every State Constitution, but one, carefully placed the word "male" in the suffrage clause.

In 1868 the Fourteenth Amendment was adopted which declares:

"Sec. 1.—All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States.

Sec. 2.—But when the *right to vote* at any election . . . is denied to any of the *male* inhabitants of such State . . . or in any way

abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such *male* citizens shall bear to the whole number of *male* citizens twenty-one years of age in such State."

Thus, for the first time, the word "male" was put in the National Constitution, because to omit the adjective would be to open the gates to woman suffrage. The amendment was soon found insufficient to protect the negro man in the exercise of the suffrage, and the Fifteenth Amendment was adopted:

"Sec. 1.—*The right of citizens of the United States to vote* shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude."

Notice the language of these two amendments, the only ones in the National Constitution bearing directly on the suffrage: "when the *right to vote* is denied to any of the male inhabitants"; "*the right of citizens of the United States to vote* shall not be denied." Could there be a more explicit recognition of the citizen's *right* to a vote? Before the passage of these amendments, no such right ever had been "conferred" on citizens of the United States, and yet they were passed for the exclusive purpose of protecting this right. If it were not an "inherent" right, where did these citizens get it? It was in fact a right of citizenship which had been fully recognized since the Declaration of Independence, when the "subjects" of the King became "citizens" of the United States. The few slight restrictions on its exercise by men had been practically eliminated for the past half-century. By Supreme Court decision women and negroes had been declared not citizens, but as soon as these decisions had been annulled by Section I of the Fourteenth Amendment, and both became citizens, they entered at once into this *citizen's right.* A penalty is provided for the denial of this right to male citizens, and none for its denial to women; but this simply leaves woman with no protection in the exercise of it when the State chooses to deny it to her.

Later, when troops were sent into certain States under the Force Bill, the Attorney-General said, in instructing the United States Marshals and asking the assistance of all loyal citizens: "It is upon such countenance and support that the United States mainly rely in their endeavor to enforce *the right to vote which they have given or secured.*"

Could any language declare more plainly than this, first, that the suffrage is a right, and, second, that the United States *can* secure it to citizens and protect them in the use of it?

Many prominent lawyers, members of Congress and others believed that the Fourteenth Amendment did unquestionably entitle women to vote, and consequently, acting under legal advice, a number of women attempted to vote at the Fall elections of 1872. Among these were Miss Susan B. Anthony, of Rochester, N. Y., and Mrs. Virginia L. Minor, of St. Louis, Mo. Miss Anthony's vote was accepted and she was afterwards arrested, refused a trial by jury and was fined by the Judge. Mrs. Minor was not permitted to register, and she brought suit against the election inspectors.

In the December term of 1872, the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision in what was known as the "Slaughter House Cases," and, as this was the first test of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Court entered into a very thorough discussion of its provisions, saying in the course of it:

"A few years' experience satisfied the author of these two amendments (13th and 14th) that . . . they were inadequate for the protection of life, liberty and property, without which freedom to the slaves was no boon. They were in all those States deprived of the *suffrage*. . . . Hence the Fifteenth Amendment, which declares that 'the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied.' The negro, having by the Fourteenth Amendment been declared to be a *citizen* of the United States, *is thus made a voter in every State in the Union.*"

Does not this decision of the United States Supreme Court clearly establish that citizenship, by the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment, carries with it the right to vote? But, when Mrs. Minor, having been refused this right, took her case to this same Court, it rendered a decision which in brief was as follows:

"The United States has no voters of its own creation. The National Constitution does not define the privileges and immunities of citizens. It does not confer the right of suffrage upon any one, but the franchise must be regulated by the States. The Fourteenth Amendment does not add to the privileges and immunities of a citizen; it simply furnishes an additional guarantee to protect those he already has."

Here we have a direct contradiction of a previous decision by practically the same Court, with no governmental or political changes in the mean time to alter conditions, but it simply had

to be made as the only means of barring women from the franchise. If any one doubts this statement, let him examine another decision of the United States Supreme Court made in 1884, in the case of Jasper Yarbrough and others, of Georgia, sentenced to hard labor in the penitentiary for preventing a negro from voting for a Congressional candidate:

"Counsel for petitioners, seizing upon the expression of the Court in the case of Minor *vs.* Happersett—that 'the Constitution of the United States does not confer the right of suffrage upon any one'—without reference to the connection in which it is used, insists that the voters in the present case do not owe their *right to vote* in any sense to that instrument. But the Court was combating the argument that the right was conferred on *all* citizens, and therefore upon women as well as men."

Another paragraph of the Yarbrough decision reads thus:

"The Fifteenth Amendment, by its limitation of the power of the States in the exercise of their right to prescribe the qualifications of voters in their own elections, and by its limitations of the power of the United States over that subject, clearly shows that the *right of suffrage* was considered to be of supreme importance to the National Government, and *was not intended to be left within the exclusive control of the States.* . . . In such cases this Fifteenth Article does *proprio vigore* substantially *confer on the negro the right to vote.* . . . This new constitutional right was mainly designed for citizens of African descent."

Compare with this the previous decision in the Minor case which said: "The National Constitution does not confer the right of suffrage upon any one, but the franchise must be regulated by the States."

The opinions of men eminent in the development of our nation, that the suffrage is the *inherent right* of every citizen of the United States, might be quoted almost indefinitely; and that we should be now nearly half-way into the second century of our national existence with this right denied to one-half of these citizens is the strangest anomaly ever witnessed in a Government.

In this long contest, women have not remained quiescent, leaving men to fight their battles. Their first organized rebellion against disfranchisement began about the middle of the nineteenth century under the intrepid leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone and their able and courageous associates. It has been often said that no great revolution comes from below. Each one must have its beginning in the

brain of the intellectually superior, who are capable of discerning the origin of those wrongs and oppressions which the masses suffer without the knowledge that relief is possible. There is no reason why the revolution against the injustice imposed upon women should prove an exception to this rule. In this, as in all reforms, a few master minds and dominant spirits have led the revolt. In all the magnificent utterances which preceded the War of the Revolution, in all those which roused the country to the contest for the abolition of slavery, will be found none to transcend the impassioned arguments of Mrs. Stanton for justice to woman. Never in the Senate of the United States was there an address more logical, dignified and statesmanlike than that of Miss Anthony in 1873 defending her right to vote. The speeches of American women demanding a voice in their own government, many of them preserved for posterity in the four large volumes comprising the History of Woman Suffrage, deserve high rank among the masterpieces of oratory. In 1854, Mrs. Stanton said in an address prepared for the New York Legislature:

"We would know by what authority you have disfranchised one-half the people of this State? You who have so boldly taken possession of the bulwarks of this republic, show us your credentials, and thus prove your exclusive right to govern not only yourselves but us. . . . Can it be that here, where we acknowledge no royal blood, no apostolic descent, that you, who have declared that all men were created equal, would willingly build up an aristocracy which places the ignorant and vulgar above the educated and refined—an aristocracy that would raise the sons above the mothers who bore them? Would that the men who can sanction a Constitution so opposed to the genius of this Government, who can enact and execute laws so degrading to womankind, had sprung, Minerva-like, from the brain of their father, that the matrons of this republic need not blush for their sons! . . . In behalf of the women of this State, we ask for all that you have asked for yourselves in the progress of your development, since the 'Mayflower' cast anchor beside Plymouth Rock; and we ask this on the ground that the rights of every human being are identical."

In her speech on Constitutional Rights, Miss Anthony said:

"The moment you deprive a person of his right to a voice in the Government, you degrade him from the status of a citizen of a republic to that of a subject. It matters very little to him whether his monarch be an individual tyrant, as the Tsar of Russia, or a 15,000,000-headed monster, as here in the United States; he is a powerless subject, serf or slave, not in any sense a free and independent citizen. . . . If we once

establish the false principle that United States citizenship does not carry with it the right to vote in every State in this Union, there is no end to the petty tricks and cunning devices which will be attempted to exclude one and another class of citizens from the right to the suffrage. It will not always be the men combining to disfranchise all women; native-born men combining to abridge the rights of all naturalized citizens, as in Rhode Island. It will not always be the rich and educated who may combine to cut off the poor and ignorant; but we may live to see the uncultivated day-laborers, foreign and native-born, learning the power of the ballot and their vast majority of numbers, combine and amend State constitutions so as to disfranchise the Vanderbilts, the Stewarts, the Conklings and the Fentons."

Hundreds of quotations might be made from the speeches of the brave women who have led this long struggle for the rights of millions of their own sex.

The utter blindness and callousness shown in this vital matter was strikingly illustrated in the platform adopted by the National Republican Convention of 1888, which opened with this ringing declaration:

"We recognize the supreme and sovereign right of every lawful citizen to cast one free ballot in all public elections, and to have that ballot duly counted. We hold the free and honest popular ballot, and the just and equal representation of all the people, to be the foundation of our republican government."

Leading women at once telegraphed to the chairman of the Convention asking if that statement included the women of the United States, and he answered: "I do not think the platform is so construed here!"

If we accept the simple premise that our Government is founded upon individual representation, the conclusion is inevitable that the franchise belongs equally to every citizen and is, therefore, a *right*. But the situation has been so befogged and bewildered by court decisions, constitutional amendments and lingering remains of the old monarchical spirit, that many persons still regard it merely as a privilege which may be justly withheld. No! The *right to vote* was recognized in the first town meetings of the colonies three centuries ago; it was forever secured in the Declaration of Independence, and it took practical and concrete form in the grand preamble, "We, the People . . . to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution." When men in a Territory or

State elect a convention of male delegates, and they frame a constitution and, in this, they limit the suffrage to males, and then it is submitted to votes of men only and declared adopted, they have violated these principles in the most brazen manner.

The decision of the Supreme Court in Mrs. Minor's case—that "the United States has no voters of its own creation," that "the franchise must be regulated by the States"—is reduced to an absurdity by the language of the Fifteenth Amendment: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States, or by any State." If the United States has no voters of its own creation, and the suffrage must be regulated by the States, why was it necessary to forbid the United States to deny or abridge it? And if the suffrage is a matter wholly pertaining to the States, what is meant by the words, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote"? They certainly imply that being a citizen of the United States carries with it the right to vote; and, if such is the case, how can a State forbid the exercise of a national right?

Some qualifications for the suffrage are essential, but they should be made solely for the good of the vote. The property qualification has met with so little favor that it has been generally abolished. The educational is necessarily so slight that it has been practically annulled. Some period of mental development must of necessity be required, so twenty-one years is the age universally agreed upon, and of course the insane and the idiotic must be excluded. It is right that some standard of moral fitness should be recognized, and therefore convicted criminals are barred out. But by what rule of common sense, by what law of equity, do the States of this Union make sex a qualification for exercising the suffrage? Children, lunatics, idiots and felons belong in the governed class, they are incompetent or unfit to govern; but what moral or constitutional right have men to put all women in this governed class? As minors, the State treats both sexes strictly as equals; it educates them for life with the public funds in precisely the same manner; but, when they reach the age of twenty-one, it says to the men, "Henceforth you are political sovereigns"; to the women, "Henceforth you are political subjects." It is the most irrational, outrageous and inexcusable situation that exists in the whole world.

From a logical and an ethical standpoint, the women of the

United States have exactly the same right to a voice in their own government that men have. The reason they do not possess it legally and constitutionally is that in the beginning men arbitrarily monopolized this citizen's right, and by keeping all legislative and judicial authorities in their own hands they have held it. In every succeeding generation of women the sense of this injustice has grown stronger. They realize now, as never before, that they have just as much at stake in the Government as men have, that they share equally the advantages of a good, and suffer equally the evils of a bad, administration. They feel, as never before, their responsibility concerning sanitation of cities, condition of streets, schools, labor, wages, charities, reforms—every question which relates to the welfare of the people; and they understand, as never before, their utter powerlessness without the ballot.

Even if men governed women with supreme wisdom and fairness, their usurpation of power would be none the less a violation of the natural rights of those governed without their consent. But they have not so governed, and not on the statute-books of any nation will be found laws which grant to women exactly the same justice as to men. This is true even in the United States, where the laws are more favorable to women than in any other country. The only permanent safety for any class lies in its ability to defend itself.

At first thought, it is incomprehensible that American men so keen in their sense of justice, so insistent in their demand for "fair play and a square deal," should so utterly ignore, should indeed persistently refuse the constitutional rights of women. It must be remembered, however, that a dominant class never extends a right or shares its power so long as it is able to retain these exclusively for itself, and that they are won by the governed class only after long and strenuous contest. The moment any class obtains the franchise, it opposes the extension to any other class. The Pilgrims and Puritans kept it closely within their own church membership. When property-holders were reluctantly admitted, they in turn prevented for many years the admission of those without property. The Know-nothing or American Party was formed to keep the franchise as long as possible from immigrants. White men held it from black, until forced to grant it through a long and costly war.

The main question now is, when the last remaining dominant class will share its assumed authority with the last remaining governed class.

Have we no men of the present great enough to complete the work of the great men of the past—to secure the Rights of Woman as their forefathers secured the Rights of Man? This can be adequately done in but one way—by supplementing the Fifteenth Amendment with a Sixteenth, which shall say, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." By proposing such an amendment to be acted upon by the State Legislatures, Congress would place the question in the hands of representative bodies. Women would then be spared the degradation of begging the individual voters, many of them most brutal, ignorant, immoral and intemperate, for permission to have a voice in their own government. They could make their arguments and appeals, with some dignity and self-respect, to men who had been selected by the various communities as lawmakers and custodians of public interests. They would also have the immense advantage of trusting their case to the decision of hundreds instead of millions.

There is no weight in the contention that the National Constitution must never again be amended. To accept this view would be to hold ourselves forever governed by the action of men long since passed from the world and its constantly changing conditions. They builded well for their day and generation, but they could not wholly anticipate the future. There is no reason to believe that they intended to abrogate that immortal preamble to the Declaration of Independence which says: "To secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it."

Our present form of government is most assuredly destructive of these ends, in so far as women are concerned, when it deprives them of the same share in it that men possess, and therefore it is the duty of the people to alter it in such manner as shall guarantee to all citizens full protection of their inalienable rights.

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